



**Vision Foundation**  
for Strategic Studies

# **Fostering Sustainable Youth Employment in Raparin Administration: A Localized Policy Framework**

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### Statement of the Institution

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A bright and prosperous future for the Kurdistan Region and Iraq through researching and studying all problems and crises and finding appropriate solutions. We contribute to the preservation and promotion of our country. As the main mission of our institution, through the presentation of policies, we offer explanations and solutions to planners and decision-making centers in both the Iraqi Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government, as well as to Parliament, public opinion, and the international community.

### Notice

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The conclusions and recommendations presented in the paper are the opinions of the researchers and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the institute.

# **Fostering Sustainable Youth Employment in Raparin Administration: A Localized Policy Framework**

## **Executive Summary**

In Raniya, a significant district within the Raparin administration of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, youth unemployment has surged to alarming levels, resulting in economic stagnation, institutional instability, and unprecedented irregular migration. This study employs a multi-dimensional, evidence-based analysis that integrates quantitative survey data from 462 youths with qualitative field insights to reveal systemic constraints, such as public sector overreliance, private market underdevelopment, capital scarcity, regulatory opacity, and entrenched socio-cultural barriers that restrict women's economic participation and hinder entrepreneurship. The findings illustrate how these dynamics interact to weaken social cohesion, intensify disillusionment, and establish risky migration pathways as a norm. selected from 10 areas of the Raparin administration with 54% male and 46% female participants. The 2025 survey demonstrated that youth unemployment reached 33.3%, and nearly half, 49.5%, of families reported instances of migration.

This paper proposes a localized policy framework that is strategically aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 1, 4, 8, 10, and 16). It incorporates economic diversification via SME development and a Youth Business Development Fund, modernized vocational and apprenticeship frameworks, digital and market access infrastructure, and legal-regulatory simplification to facilitate private investment and entrepreneurial expansion. The statement emphasizes the simultaneous importance of empowering youth in civic engagement, promoting gender equity initiatives, and enhancing institutional capacities to restore trust and create an environment conducive to sustainable employment.

A staged transformation plan from diagnostic foundations and pilot projects to comprehensive reform and enduring institutionalization is supported by strong monitoring and evaluation systems with explicit performance indicators for job creation, migration reduction, and local governance involvement. This study reframes youth unemployment as a strategic development tool rather than a destabilizing burden, providing a replicable framework for resilience in fragile and transitional economies.

## The Enduring Crisis of Youth Unemployment in Raniya

In many countries around the world, they are facing this a giant and danger called unemployment, which refers to the inability of people who are willing and able to work to find employment, including the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (UNIDO and the Ministry of Education-KRG, 2020), due to the high number of graduates in many disciplines and the lack of job opportunities. Together, these socio-economic disruptions have resulted in an unexpectedly high unemployment rate of 14.97% in 2024 for the KRG (Central Statistical Organisation et al., 2022; Kurdistan Region Statistics Office, 2022).

Raniya, as a prominent urban hub within the Raparin district, bears a significant share of this mandate. This may be attributed to its geographical situation and the historical lack of investment in industrial infrastructure and strategic initiatives. The current economic circumstances have resulted in a significant rise in the emigration of youth from Raniya, with data available showing that hundreds of young people depart from the broader Raparin district to around the world each week through life-threatening irregular migration routes from region to region. This reality that gets extended from extreme unemployment in Raniya yields a wider socio-economical orbit that seems in association with expanding unofficial criminal activities such as drug smuggling and use that wipes down the community challenges and enhances the regional societal fragility (Sabri, 2025). It is therefore, in this context, that we highlight the need for a wide-ranging, detailed, context-specific policy response for Raniya.

## A Rigorous Multi-Dimensional Diagnostic Analyses if Youth Unemployment in Raniya

### Economic Dimension

**Structural Deficiencies:** Sustainable local job creation is severely impeded by Raniya's over-reliance on public sector employment and its young, undiversified private sector, especially in high-growth industries and services (Alayseri et al., 2024; British Council, 2024).

**Limited Local Investment:** This shortfall of efficient and productive domestic and foreign direct investment (FDI) specific to Raniya has fostered an adverse and challenging business climate, in which the town is facing persistent barriers to success (ITC–NRC, 2022; Bayan Center, 2023).

**Market Inefficiencies:** Within Raniya, there are significant gaps existing in the local labour market, including weak information transfers, a clear competency deficit between local industry demands and Raniya's market-relevant educational outputs, and a lack of affordable credit and financing to small enterprises and potential entrepreneurs in the community (ITC–NRC, 2022; Alayseri et al., 2024; ILO, 2024).

## Social Dimension

**Demographic Pressure:** The large percentage of the town's youth without opportunities leads to extreme levels of migration pressure, which has caused a critical brain drain and extreme social disruption in the families and communities of Raniya (British Council, 2024; Gertz et al., 2019).

**Social Issue:** The issue of extended unemployment in Raniya, especially in young men, has deepened social exclusions and made them marginalized, which led to isolation, widening social inequities, and undermining community bonds. This has all contributed to weakness in social resilience against regional threats that are possible to occur (British Council, 2024; Brookings, 2019).

Prolonged youth unemployment in Raniya has eroded trust in educational institutions, public programs, and societal norms, fueling widespread disappearance and disengagement (Gertz et al., 2019; British Council, 2024).

## Cultural Dimension

**Culture of Work:** The rapid changes in the dynamic of the working sector and styles across the region in the last decades have challenged Raniya's traditional labour preference, complicating any efforts to integrate the new generation community into new, modernized, and emerging private sector roles over traditional working fields like agriculture (ITC–NRC, 2022).

**Reluctance toward Entrepreneurship Ventures:** The general societal preference for risk-averse, salaried work may unintentionally discourage young people in Raniya from pursuing innovative projects and entrepreneurial ambitions (ITC–NRC, 2022; Alayseri et al., 2024).

**Gendered Norms:** Raniya is known for its deep-rooted cultural norms that are rich and fruitful but at the same time can be a factor to restrict women from holding formal jobs or starting their own businesses like men do, resulting in an enormous underutilisation of human capital in the town since women's participation is low (ITC–NRC, 2022; British Council, 2024; ILO, 2024).

## Political Dimension

**Trust Deficit:** The lack of coherent, consistent, and long-term policies for youth employment and private sector development in Raniya, bureaucratic inertia at the local administrative level in the context of partially devolved powers, and active neglect by the government all erode local trust (British Council, 2024).

**Implementation of Policies:** Often the reason why intent does not convert to actual implementation in Raniya is down to corruption, lack of interdepartmental coordination, or institutional shortcomings of Raniya's local government (Bayan Center, 2023).

**Lack of Engagement by the Youth:** (British Council, 2024; Gertz et al., 2019).

## Legal Dimension

**Regulatory Burden:** Complicated, non-transparent, or unduly burdensome business registration processes and vagueness of property rights under the law in Raniya can be highly disruptive to new business and job creation (ITC–NRC, 2022; ILO, 2024).

**Enforcement Gaps:** The process of local enforcement of contracts and business laws is uneven so the investment climate for both Raniya's domestic and foreign capital is not suitable (Bayan Center, 2023).

**Judicial Accessibility:** Ongoing issues and barriers exist regarding accessibility, efficiency, and fairness in resolving commercial disputes within the local judicial system, complicating Raniya's ability to engage in the entrepreneurial activities necessary for success without encountering legal challenges. This consequently hinders economic diversification, productivity, and job opportunities (ILO, 2024; ITC–NRC, 2022). The issue of youth unemployment in Raniya cannot be resolved through a singular approach (British Council, 2024; Alayseri et al., 2024).

## Data Collection and Methodology

The Vision Foundation for Strategic Studies conducted a survey on September 4, 2025, involving a team of 21 individuals. This survey targeted young people aged 16 to 36 years in the Raparin region, which includes the areas of Ranya, Qaladze, Sangasar, Hajiawa, Hiro, Halsho, Chawarqurna, Sarkapkan, Betwata, and Zharawa. The survey used purposive random sampling to ensure fair representation from all subdistricts.

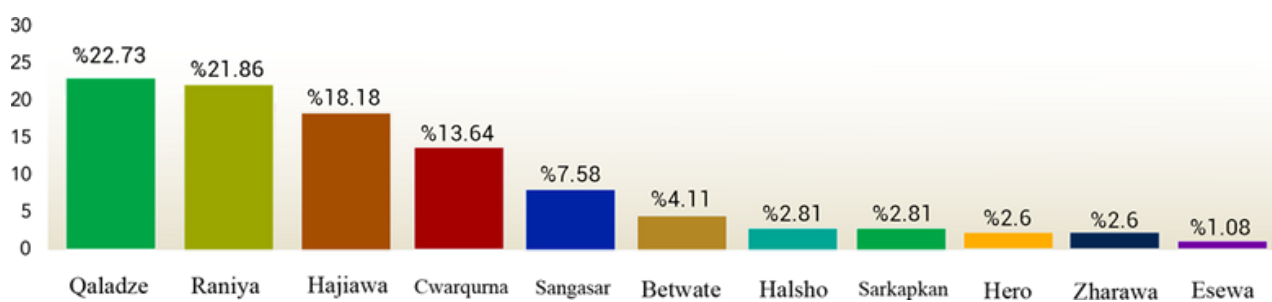
The survey was administered through direct interpersonal interaction. A total of 462 individuals in their youth participated in the survey. The distribution of participants was categorized according to regional demographics.

Statistics from the survey reveal that unemployment serves as the primary catalyst for the illegal migration of youth in the region, with a significant proportion of respondents reporting that one or more members of their immediate family have migrated.

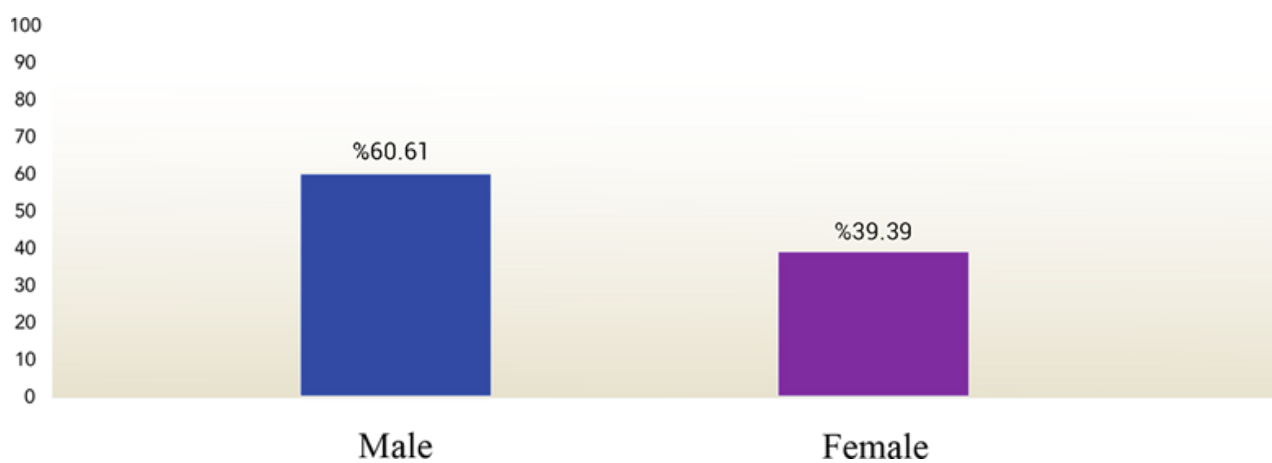
## Result and Discussion



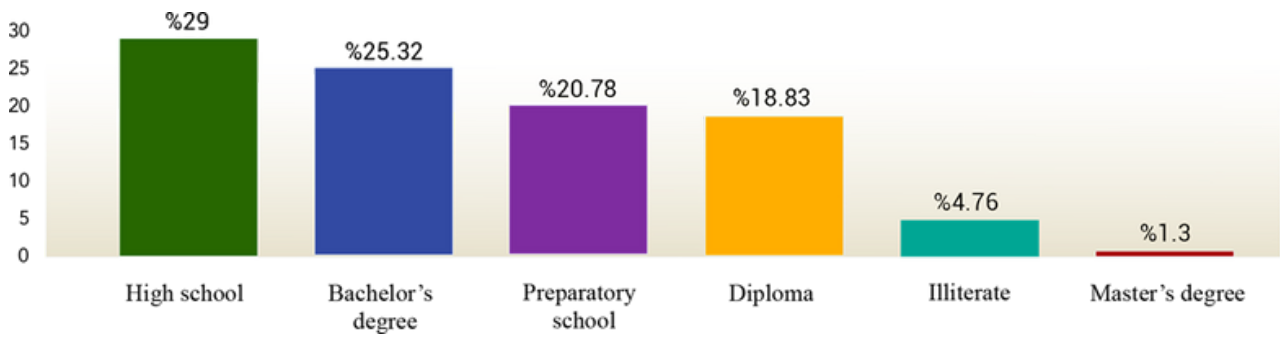
**Figure 1.** Distribution of participants according to age group



**Figure 2.** Distribution of participants according to place of residence



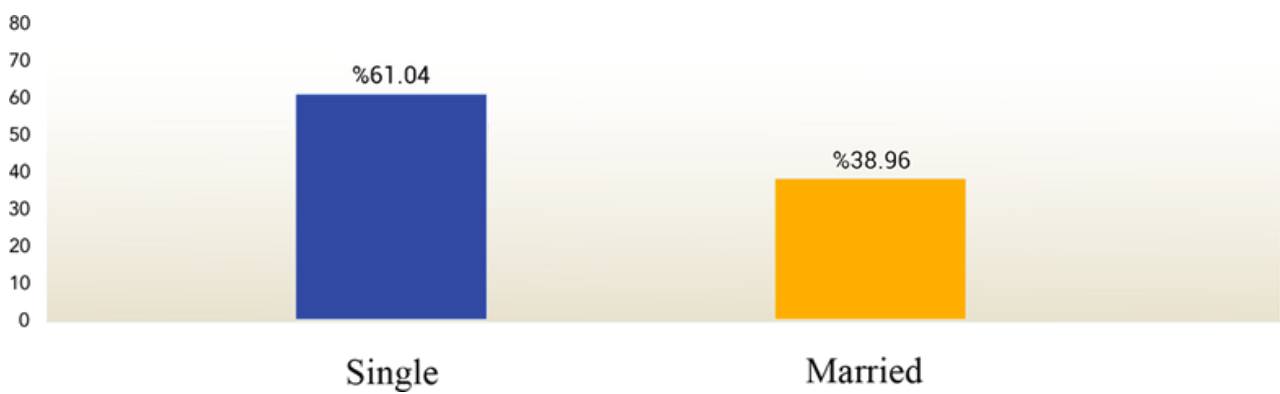
**Figure 3.** Distribution of participants according to gender



**Figure 4.** Distribution of participants according to educational level

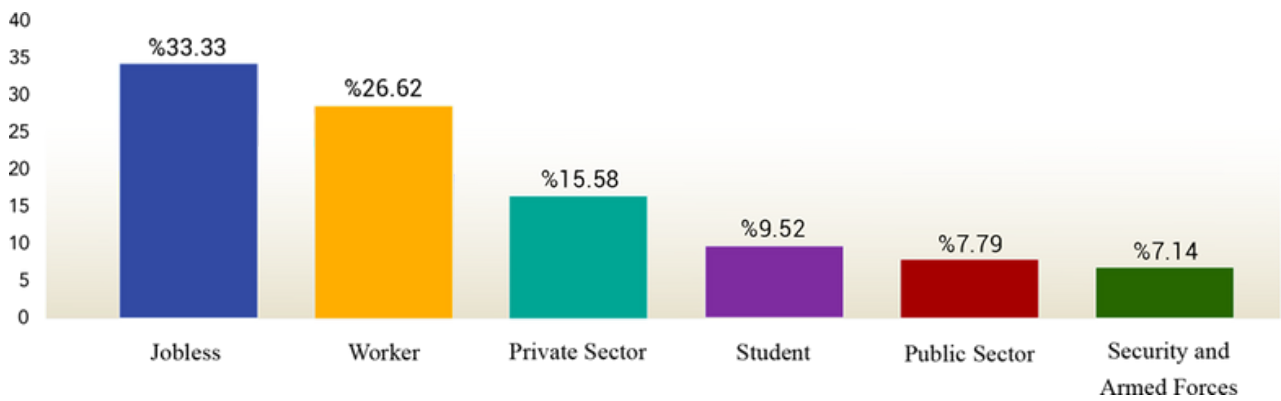


**Figure 5.** Distribution of participants according to socioeconomic status

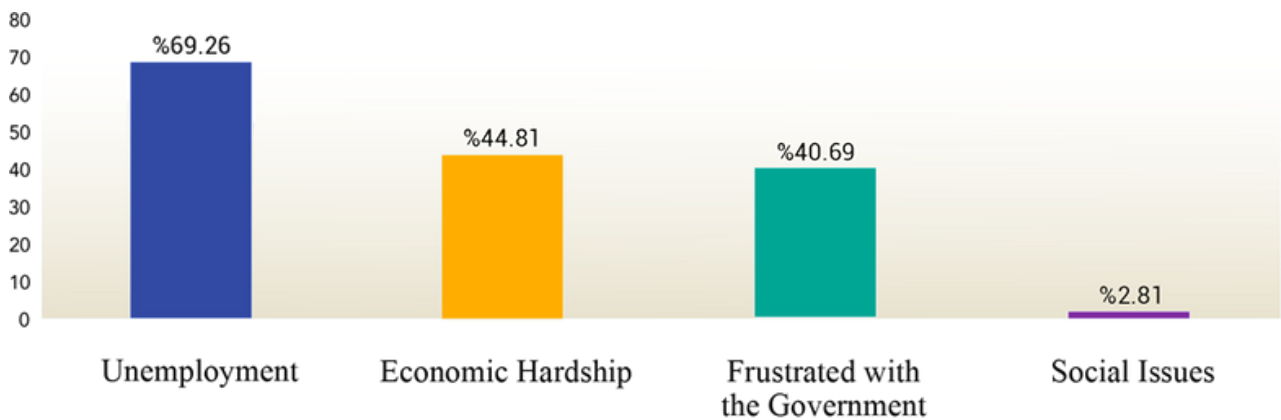


**Figure 6.** Distribution of participants according to marital status





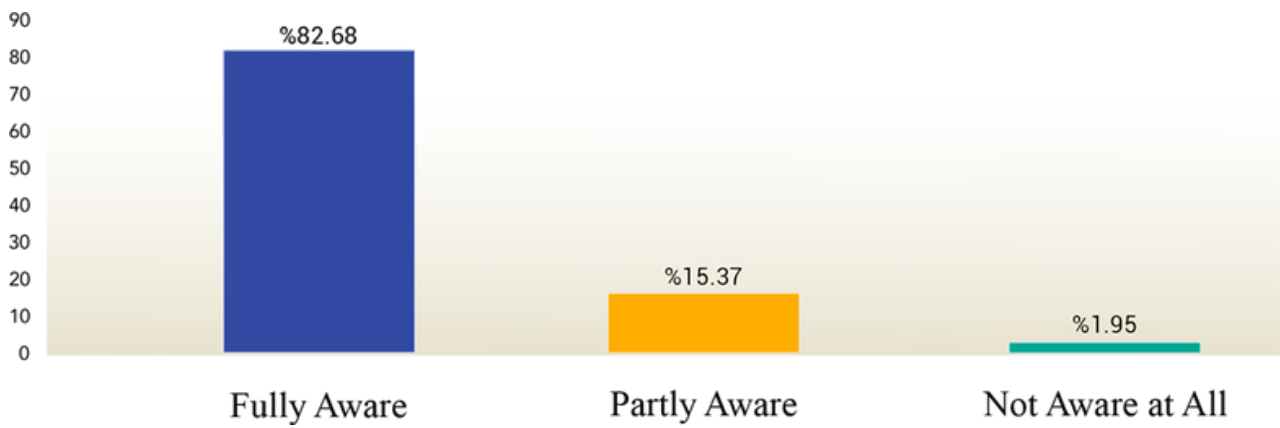
**Figure 7.** Distribution of participants according to workplace



**Figure 8.** Factors that drive youth migration through illegal channels



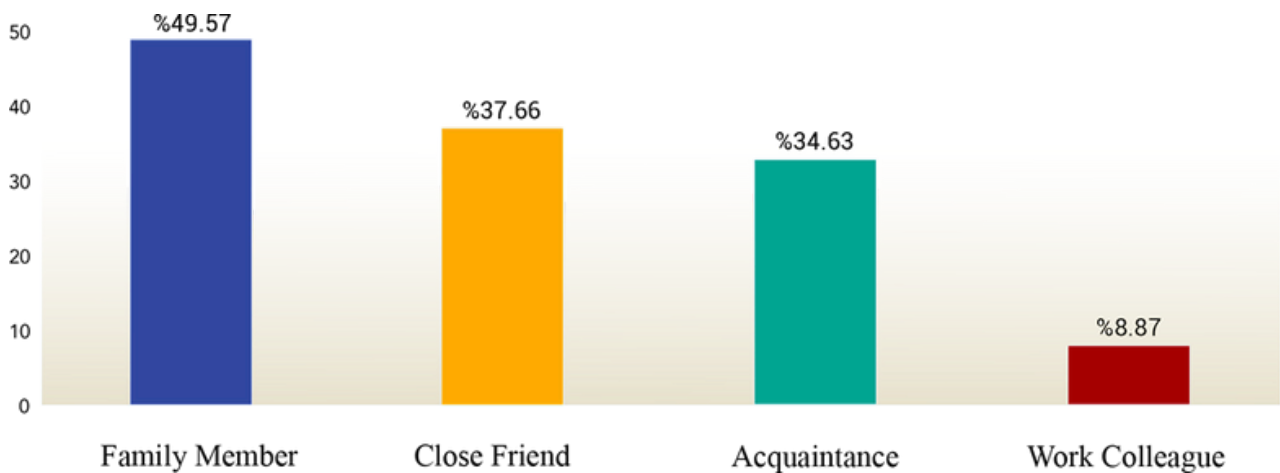
**Figure 9.** Prevalence of illegal channels of migration in different parts of the Raparin Administration.  
Note: The participants in this question were allowed to select more than one answer.



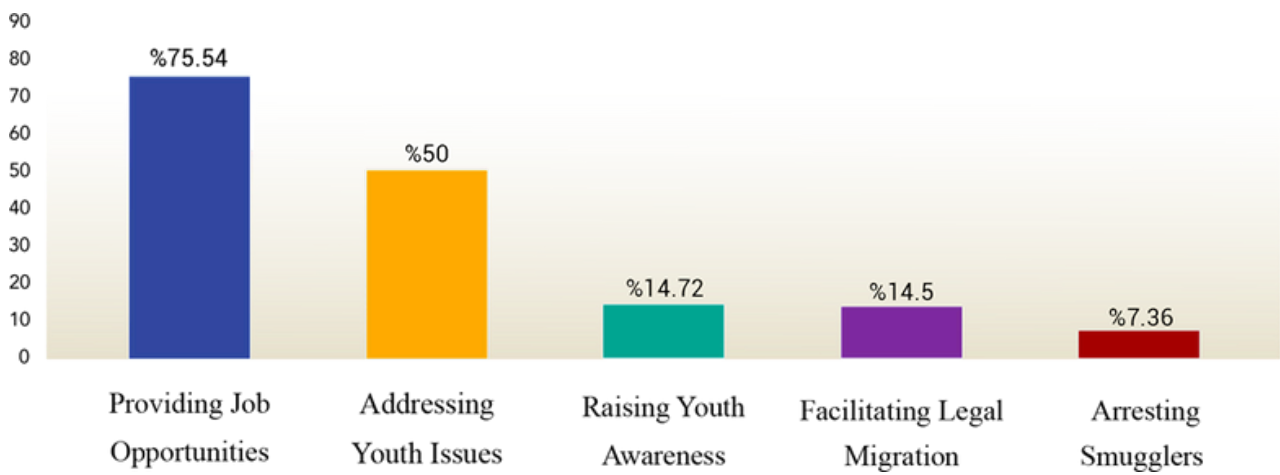
**Figure 10.** Degree of youth awareness of the illegality and risk associated with illegal migration



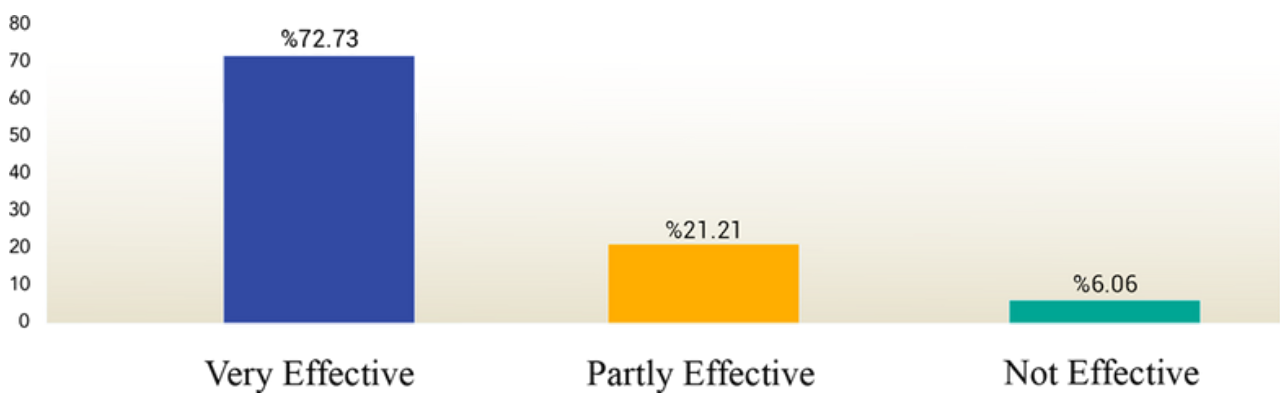
**Figure 11.** Push factors that propel the youth towards illegal migration. Note: The participants in this question were allowed to select more than one answer.



**Figure 12.** Degree of the respondent's connections with individuals involved in illegal migration. Note: The participants in this question were allowed to select more than one answer.



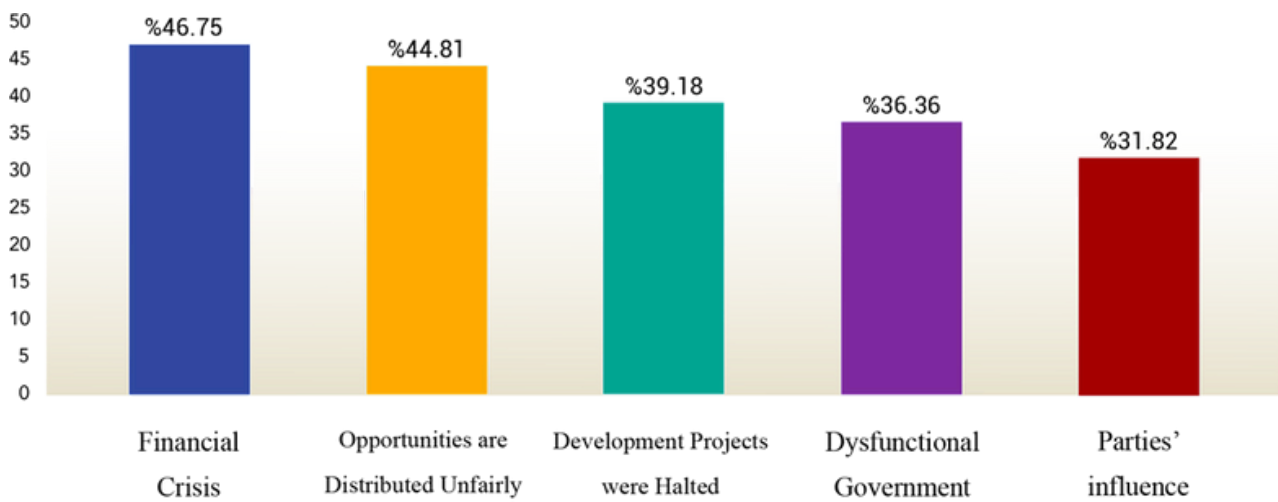
**Figure 13.** View of the respondents regarding measures to prevent illegal migration. Note: The participants in this question were allowed to select more than one answer.



**Figure 14.** The role of economic support to youth projects as a preventive measure against illegal



**Figure 15.** Financial support required for young people to start small projects



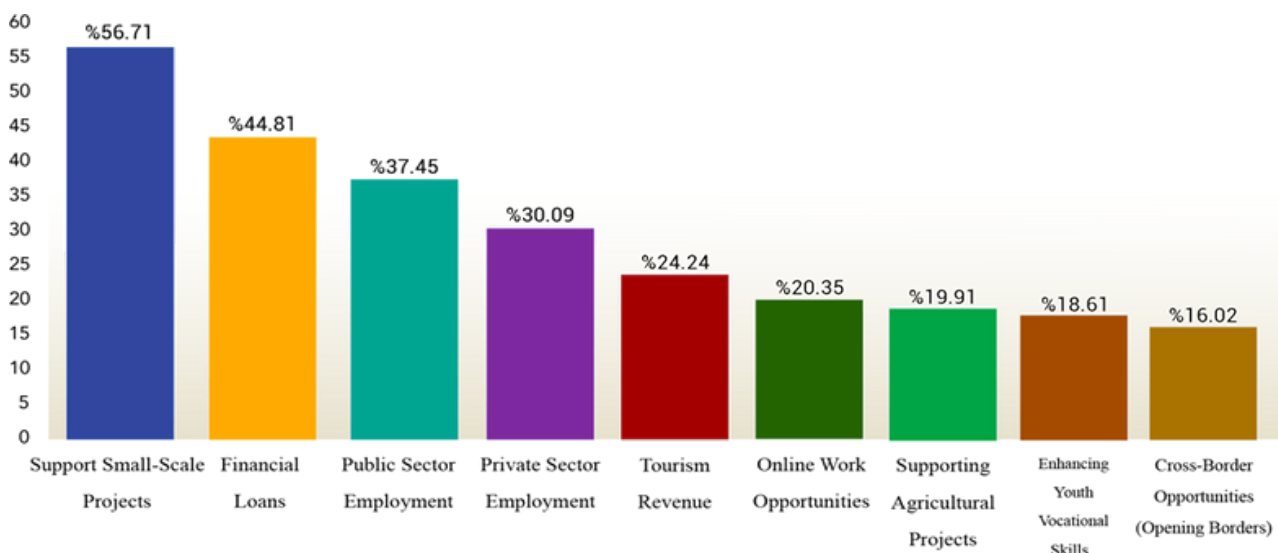
**Figure 16.** Reasons for youth unemployment in the Raparin Administration. Note: The participants in this question were allowed to select more than one answer.



**Figure 17.** Degree of access to professional training programs with a view to improving vocational skills



**Figure 18.** Degree of Vocational skills in youth within the Raparin Administration.



**Figure 19.** Mechanisms for increasing youth employment opportunities in the Raparin administration. Note: The participants in this question were allowed to select more than one answer.

## Discussion

### The rate of unemployment

The survey indicates that the unemployment rate for individuals aged 16 to 36 during the Raparin administration stands at 33.33%, with 9.52% of respondents identifying as students who are not employed. Families are actively involved in professional endeavors. The survey results indicate that 31.38% of respondents reported their livelihood as very poor or bad, whereas 68.62% described it as very satisfactory. Refer to graph 5.

The factors contributing to youth unemployment in Raparin mirror those observed in many other areas of the Kurdistan Region. Their challenges are widespread, with many individuals impacted by the ongoing and exacerbated financial crisis between Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

The survey reveals that 46.75% of young individuals attribute the adverse economic conditions to unemployment in their area, while 44.81% point to inequality in the distribution of job opportunities. Additionally, 39.18% cite the stagnation of reconstruction initiatives, 36.36% highlight the absence of sound governance, and 31.82% identify party interference as a contributing factor. Refer to graph 16.

### Professionalism and labor force

The educational attainment and university qualifications among the youth of Raparin are predominantly inadequate, which will adversely affect access to employment opportunities, particularly in the private sector, as companies preferentially hire individuals with degrees and specialized skills.

The survey indicates that 29% of young individuals in Raparin possess high school diplomas. 20.78% of individuals possess a basic degree, 18.83% hold a diploma, 4.76% are classified as illiterate, 25.32% have obtained a bachelor's degree, and 1.3% possess a master's degree. Please refer to graph 4 for additional conclusions.

Concerning the potential for skills development, 62.12% of the youth within the Raparin administration expressed that "there are no opportunities in their area to participate in courses designed to improve their professional skills." A total of 24.24% of respondents indicated a desire for training courses, while 16.23% highlighted the deficiencies in professional skills among the youth within the Raparin administration. Please refer to graphs 17 and 18 for more detail.

### **Employment opportunities**

The geographical location and natural characteristics of Raparin, a border area rich in water resources and scenic beauty, contrast with the priorities of its youth, who are increasingly focused on securing employment in both the public and private sectors.

56.71% of Ranya's youth believe that supporting small projects can generate job opportunities. Additionally, 44.81% view small loans as essential, while 37.45% favor employment in the public sector, and 30.09% prefer opportunities in the private sector. Refer to Graph No. 19.

The survey reveals that 24.24% of the youth in Raparin perceive the revival of tourism as a source of job opportunities, whereas 20.35% consider online work to be a feasible alternative. Furthermore, 19.91% hold the view that revitalizing agriculture is essential, while 18.61% support the idea of improving formal professional capacity as an effective approach for job creation. Refer to Graph No. 19.

### **Unemployment and unauthorized immigration**

While precise and dependable statistics regarding the smuggling and illegal migration of youth in Raparin are lacking, the names of young individuals involved in incidents of drowning and the apprehension of illegal Kurdish immigrants frequently appear in media reports.

The survey conducted by the Vision Foundation for Strategic Studies indicates a significant correlation between youth unemployment and the smuggling of youth from the region to European countries, with a reported figure of 2.81%. Examine social issues as the underlying cause of the illegal migration of youth in the region. Refer to Graph No. 8.

### **Illegal migration (Smuggling)**

The survey reveals 49.57% of respondents report that someone in their immediate family has engaged in smuggling, while 37.66% indicate that close friends have participated in such activities, and 8.87% acknowledge a colleague involved in smuggling. (Refer to Graph No. 12).

The survey indicates that social networking propaganda serves as the most apparent motivator for illegal migration, with 39.39% of respondents acknowledging this factor. Additionally, 38.53% attribute the ease of access to smugglers as another significant reason, while 24.03% cite familial connections as incentives for migration. The unlawful status of their youth suggests that certain families perceive the existence of a grandchild overseas as a potential financial resource for their sustenance.

**Investigation of Unemployment Trends Among Youth** The concerning aspect is that the youth in the Raparin administration are cognizant of the illegality and risks associated with this type of migration, yet they pursue it despite the inherent dangers, which tragically can result in fatalities and drownings at sea.

The survey indicates that 82.68% of respondents are confident that young people are aware that this method of migration is illegal, smuggled, and dangerous, while 15.37% believe that young people have some awareness of the risks associated with it. Refer to Graph No. 10.

### **The crime of human trafficking remains**

Despite the collaborative efforts of European nations and the UK alongside the Kurdistan Regional Government to apprehend smugglers, a survey conducted by the Vision Foundation indicates that smuggling persists within the Raparin administration.

The survey revealed that 65.15% of respondents affirmed that, “yes, illegal migration routes are available in their area.” 27.49% indicated that smuggled migration routes are accessible, while only 7.36% refuted the existence of illegal migration routes in their vicinity. Refer to Graph No. 9.

### **Mitigating illegal immigration**

Creating job opportunities is a primary rationale for preventing illegal migration among young people, with 75.54% of survey respondents supporting this view. Additionally, 50% of respondents identified addressing youth issues as a significant reason to combat illegal migration. Only 7.36% of respondents believe that the arrest of smugglers will effectively prevent illegal immigration. Refer to Graph No. 13.

Efforts are underway to support youth-led initiatives in their home countries, aimed at reducing the incentive for illegal migration to European nations and the UK.

The survey indicates that 72.73% of respondents believe that financial support for youth projects will promote legal and safe migration among young people, while 21.21% assert that it will encourage legal migration. Refer to graph 14.

International organizations have increasingly supported small projects in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region in recent years as a strategy to generate employment and deter illegal youth migration.

The survey indicates that 30.74% of respondents estimate that initiating a small project in Raparin necessitates \$10,000, while 27.49% estimate a requirement of \$7,000. Additionally, 25.76% of respondents believe that starting a small project requires more than \$10,000, while 16.02% assert that it requires \$3,000 (refer to Graph 15).

## Conclusion

Raniya's youth unemployment is structural, but not intractable. This policy paper shows that economic stagnation, weak governance, entrenched social exclusion, and restrictive cultural and legal barriers drive the problem, not just labor market imbalances. These factors will fuel irregular migration, weaken communities, and hurt the region's long-term development without a coordinated approach.

The same analysis identifies other untapped strengths as the country's young population with proven adaptability and aspirations for economic independence, its cultural heritage with market potential, its fertile agricultural capacity, and its emerging but under-supported entrepreneurial base. The town can be transformed from a place of disillusionment and outmigration to a productive, inclusive hub for development by leveraging these resources through an evidence-based, community-centered approach.

The framework guides development from reactive to proactive. By promoting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), strategically investing in key sectors, improving skills through modern job training and digital education, and reducing legal and governance barriers, Raniya can boost its local economy and youth development.

This shift requires long-term political commitment, inclusive planning, and rigorous monitoring for policy continuity and accountability in the Kurdistan Regional Government and local administration. Raniya's community must adopt a new development vision that combines tradition, innovation, and risk-taking with resilience.

Investing in Raniya's youth is a moral, economic, and political imperative for Raparin's stability, self-reliance, and future prosperity. Raniya can inspire locally driven solutions to youth unemployment in fragile and transitional contexts with sustained action and collaboration from public institutions, private enterprise, civil society, and international partners.



## Policy Recommendations

### 1. Towards a Sustainable and Empowered Future in Raniya

The challenge of youth unemployment is not easy to resolve by one single intervention but rather must be examined through different perspectives and rigorous study to find a suitable solution and a long-term strategic plan to implement it, creating an environment for the creation of jobs for youth in Raniya. It is worth mentioning that each policy intervention in the future will need to be based on evidence, contextualised, and a thorough understanding of Raniya's situation.

### 2. Economic Revitalisation and Diversification for Raniya

#### A. Catalyse Local Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Raniya

Action: Establish a unique public-private partnership fund, the Raniya Youth Business Development Fund, to provide existing SMEs with quick access to low-interest, SME-type loans, microgrants, and partial loan guarantees in growth-focused sectors.

Action: Create & support a "Raniya Business Incubator & Accelerator," probably in partnership with local organisations and the Raniya campus/departments of Raparin University. As for Raniya, this centre should provide tailored guidance, comprehensive business planning aid, legal counselling services, and affordable co-working spaces.

Action: Raniya, like many other local administrations, should develop a simplified business registration and licensing practice that functions as a "single-window" service in a more straightforward environment. This will ensure that processes are transparent, rapid, and, where possible, digital for community entrepreneurs.

Focus Sectoral Support: Given Raniya's local resource base and the gaps in the market, encourage and compensate for the initiatives in sectors that align with this base, including:

Agriculture and food processing: Proposing small processing plants for local products like local artisanal jams, pickles, dried fruits, and dairy in the agricultural hinterland, around Raniya for more value-added supply chains.

Handicraft and Craft Manufacturing: Investing in workshops for textiles, woodwork, pottery, and other authentic traditional handicrafts found only in the region, enabling Raniya to monetise its heritage and traditional skills.

Core Local Services: Facilitating the establishment of localized repair services for electronics and agricultural machinery, as well as basic local IT and digital services such as internet service hubs and foundational digital literacy training (Bapir et al., 2025), alongside e-commerce support services to connect local producers in Raniya with larger downstream markets.

**Vibrant Community: Localised Tourism & Hospitality Opportunities:** The initiative involves the establishment of small but culturally rich guest houses/homestays in and around Raniya, the training of local youth as certified tour guides for nearby attractions, and the support of niche cafes/restaurants serving local cuisines.

**Promotion of Green Economy:** Creation of small-scale recycling and waste sorting enterprises in Raniya to address an environmental demand while creating local green jobs.

## **B. Reliable Small Business Ideas for Raniya**

Focusing on Raniya's abundant land, cultural wealth, and growing need for a diverse array of local services, these small business ideas are meant to be practical and long running and to generate employment for local youth. These provide different pipelines to funding from the Raniya Youth Business Development Fund and serve as real-world demonstrations of the "Targeted Sectoral Support" described above.

### **-Agribusiness & Value-Added Products (Core Strength) Speciality Fruit & Vegetable Processing (Dried Fruits, Jams, Pickles)**

**Focus:** Turning Raniya's abundant harvest of pomegranates, grapes, apples, figs, olives, peaches, apricots, watermelon, and melons into high-value artisanal food items such as jams, sun-dried fruits, and pickled vegetables. The process extends the shelf life of the product and brings in revenue year-round.

Raniya is a reliable partner as it employs local crop produce, reduces post-harvest losses, and provides product differentiation. BOI KRG statistics show an increasing trend towards establishing fruit juice, paste, and jam plants in Raparin, which suggests a future market.

**Sector Opportunities:** Emphasis on organic certification, flavor combinations, and appealing local branding for a premium market.

### **-Artisan Dairy & Fermented Products:**

**Summary:** Artisan production of traditional and premium dairy products, local cheese, quality yoghurt, ghee, and ayran with fresh milk and Mastaw another Kurdish fermented drink, that are likely to be used.

**Why you can trust Raniya:** Uses existing dairy animals' practices There is high demand for dairy products produced with fresh raw materials. The potential for craft quality is higher prices than mass-produced products. BOI data shows that there is a healthy interest specifically in plants that produce dairy.

**Product & Opportunity:** hand-made traditional Kurdish recipes, sourcing organic milk, small-batch organic food production.

### **-Local Honey & Bee Products (Apiculture)**

Description: Bee-keeping is an arrangement contemplating bee-keeping production. It is also diversifying into beeswax-based production like candles and other natural cosmetics, along with propolis and royal jelly.

Why we can trust Raniya: The ambient agriculture environment where bees are able to forage. Local Demand and Export Potential for Honey Few hives can be established cost-effectively. BOI data highlights the interest in honey packaging and beeswax harvesting.

Sector Opportunities: Natural and organic certification as well as single-source floral honey (e.g., wildflower honey from Raniya's mountains).

### **-Local Livestock Feed Production:**

Description: Creating custom feed mixes for poultry, sheep, goats, and cattle using local grains and agricultural byproducts. This reduces the reliance on imported feed.

The local livestock farming sector is an important primary producer in terms of direct support for Raniya. By scavenging surrounding farm waste, it builds up a closed-loop ecosystem. BOI data indicate that feed plants that supply different categories of livestock exist.

Sector Opportunities: Organic feed, compound feed and tailor-made mixes for different species or stages of production; animal nutrition advisory services to farmers.

### **-Crafts & Cultural Tourism (Leveraging Heritage) Modern Kurdish Handicrafts (Textiles, Pottery, Woodwork)**

Workshop Description: Workshops focused on contemporary responses to traditional Kurdish crafts. Such as modern-style woven textiles (rugs, bags, and cushion covers), handmade pottery/ceramic products (home decor/kitchenware), and small wooden crafts.

Justification for Raniya reliability: This business model is built on Raniya' cultural heritage/traditional skills. It is intended for and contributes to the local market while also enhancing tourism in the KRG region. It requires a small set of tools and materials to be started. Women and youth are already producing handicrafts for tourism through UNDP and KRG initiatives.

Sector Opportunities: Online sales platforms, customised orders, and collaborations with local guesthouses to provide unique amenities.

### **-Local Tourism Experience Providers:**

Description: Youth-led ventures provide specialised tourism services, including certified tour guiding for Raniya's historical sites (Ranya Citadel, Shmshara Hill) and natural attractions (Lake Dukan, mountains), which can be multilingual.

Workshops/classes/cookery classes/food tours: Hands-on experience with local Kurdish food. Management of Homestay/Guesthouse, It involves the management of small and authentic guesthouses that offer cultural immersion.

Why it's Raniya: this strategy relies on the well-marketed tourism potential of Raniya, including its mountains, lakes, and many historical sites. It directly creates jobs in a developing field, which the KRG is actively courting to loosen its economic stranglehold.

Areas of Opportunity: Eco-tourism packages, adventure tourism (hike and bird watching), and specialised historical tours.

### **3. Sustaining Modernisation**

#### **A. Digital Marketing and E-commerce Support Services:**

Summary: Supporting the local Raniya businesses (SMEs, artisans and farmers) with an e-presence. Including website building, social media management, product imagery, e-commerce platform configuration, and digital advertising.

Reasons for Raniya's reliability: It addresses the "market inefficiencies" that result from restricted information flow and market access. But now Raniya has the potential to solve some of these problems, this is because the government is working to build a well-connected and enhanced network backbone in the region. It is also worth mentioning that the physical infrastructure there is mostly new, which can be seen as a good gesture.

Sector Opportunities: Services related to agriculture including the items or materials being used, online sales platforms for local products from Raniya, and workshops to encourage digital literacy.

#### **B. Specialised Repair & Maintenance Services:**

Description: Beyond core mechanics, highlight desirable services, like Repaired Agricultural machinery is necessary for a farming community.

Home Appliance & Electronics Repair: Highest Local Demand. Solar Panel Installation & Maintenance: Growing demand for renewable energy options, especially in locations with inconsistent grid power.

What makes Raniya trust the service: Raniya trusts this service because it meets an important community need. For example, vocational training is taught to train the technical know-how essential for the setting up of solar panels and, conversely, to maintain the panels to keep them functioning. Because nearly all you need to bring into the world are the tools you will need to create, starting off with much lower investment.

Sector Opportunities: Maintenance contracts with local enterprises, farms, and mobile units for repairs.

### **C. Sustainable Waste Management & Recycling Ventures:**

Description: Establishment of a materials recovery facility at a small scale to source-segregate recyclable materials (plastics, paper, glass, metals) at homes and businesses in Raniya. The project may also scale to cover composting organic waste for local farmers.

Why Raniya is dependable: it solves an important urgent environmental need and a prevalent urban issue facing developing countries. It generates "green jobs" of immense community value with little degree of skill.

Opportunities in the sector: upcycling workshops, making recycled goods (plastic bricks or paper stuff), and working with big recycling plants in Sulaymaniyah.

### **D. Modern Agricultural Input Supply & Consultation:**

Description: There are many examples to show this point, maybe a company that sells high-quality, locally adapted seeds, organic fertilisers, pest control solutions, and possibly agricultural consultation services (such as soil testing and crop rotation advice) to local farmers, in a way which benefit both sides.

Raniya is a reliable for these new businesses, because it has large geographical areas for agriculture and it is fertile land, which is one of the basic factors that support the local economy. This company may meet the need for better agriculture methods and sustainability for all the farmers in the region.

Opportunities in the sector: Enhance the different strategies used by farmers through consultation, maybe increasing the information regarding its biological side like bio-engineering, technology dissemination of drones for precision agriculture, and training workshops on modern farming techniques.

## **4. Raniya Market Access and Infrastructure Improvements**

Action: Make a strategic investment in Raniya's key local infrastructure development (internal roads, constant access to electricity, internet connection, etc.) to lower business operational expenses and facilitate access to larger markets.

Action: Support for formal and informal linkages and networking between the new businesses of Raniya and the bigger distributors, retailers, or e-commerce networks in the main cities of the KRG (Sulaymaniyah, Erbil) for wider market access and supply chain integration.

### **Human Capital and skills Development among Raniya's Youth**

#### **-Modernise Vocational Training and Apprenticeships in Raniya.**

Action: One of the main critical points to consider is to collaborate with local industries and experts in Raniya to identify missing skills in the field, which is clearly observed, so we can restructure training programs accordingly, this is to match the present and future demand of the local labour market.

Action: To have accredited apprenticeship programs at local businesses in Raniya, to provide structured on-the-job training and clear pathways into formal employment or self-employment.

Recommendation: Incorporate essential soft-skills training (such as critical thinking, language/communication proficiency, problem-solving, digital literacy, and collaboration) across all vocational and educational programs available to youth in Raniya to enable improved youth employability and adaptability in both the short and longer terms.

#### **-Establish Proactive Career Guidance and Placement Services in Raniya:**

Action: Establish and fund local career guidance centers in Raniya that provide individual career counseling, local labour market development, resume writing, mock interviews, and

Action: Create a centralised and publicly accessible online system for job seekers and employers. It can be used by any individual in the local community and in combination with local job opportunities boards or job registries (outdoor notice boards where job vacancies are advertised).

### **5. Good Governance and Regulatory Environment**

#### **A. Improve the governance capacity at the local level of Raniya and accountability (for local governance structures).**

Action: increase Raniya's local administration fiscal independence and investing power in the planning and implementation of local economic development, thus providing a more responsive decision-making process for Raniya.

Action: Establish public and investor confidence by ensuring Raniya's local government budget, procurement, and investment decision-making processes work with accountability and transparency.

#### **B. Rationalise and Modernise Legal and Regulatory Frameworks for Raniya**

Action: One very effective point to easily develop the overall situation is to Invest in improving judicial capacity; it means to strengthen Raniya's local courts to handle business disputes faster and more fairly. This will lead to boosting investor confidence and reducing business risk.

### **6. Social Cohesion and Youth Empowerment in Raniya**

#### **A. Empower and Collaborate with Youth Organisations in Raniya:**

Action: Sustain, fund, and provide targeted technical assistance and capacity-building support over multi-annual cycles to the local youth organisations in Raniya, where they can develop and deliver more community-based programming, mentorship schemes, and social and recreational activities to counter disillusion and inclusivity.

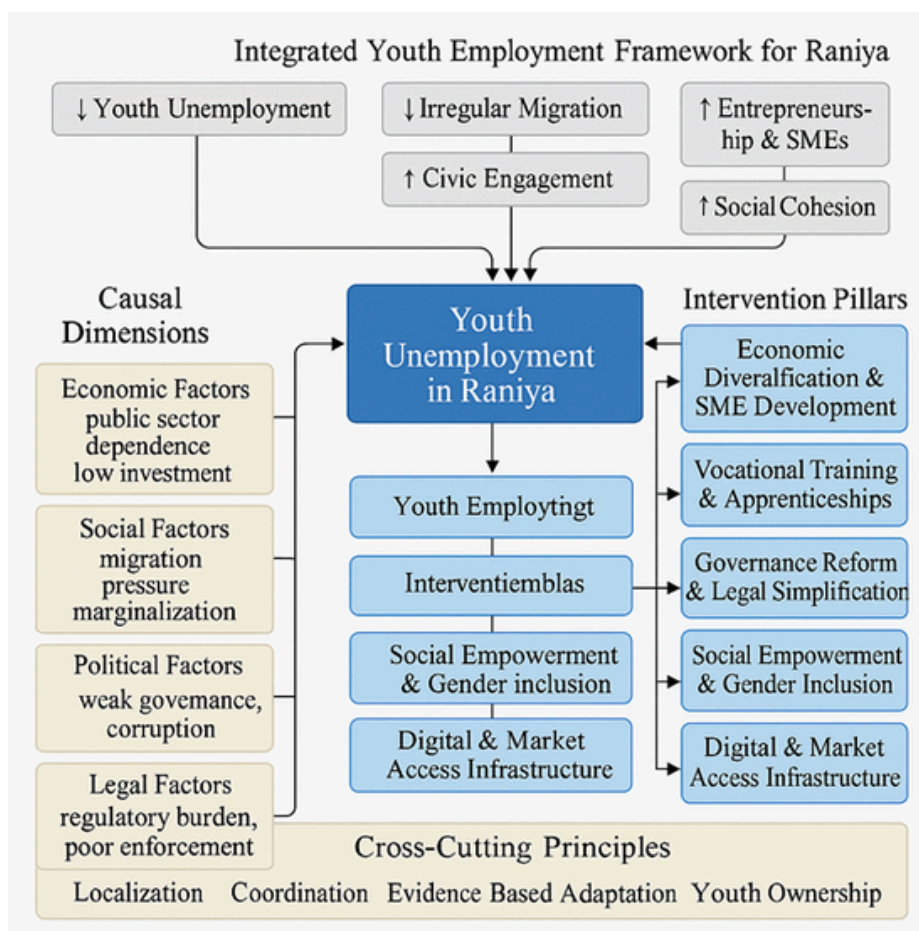


Action: Establish a formal, structured mechanism for youth consultation, engagement, and incorporation in Raniya local policy dialogues and development planning solutions.

## B. Address Socio-Cultural Barriers to Employment in Raniya

Action: Conduct specific public awareness campaigns in Raniya to promote entrepreneurship and vocational careers through local media and use community leaders to make entrepreneurship and vocational careers more appealing to society.

Action: Identify and develop targeted programs that create incentives and provide support for female youth to gain employment or start a business in Raniya, while addressing the traditional barriers to women's entry to the overall workforce and linking female youth with needed support systems. (e.g. parental options, flexible scheduling options, alternative work arrangements, etc.) These are all at the end and will support more participation from women.



**Figure 20.** Raniya Integrated Youth Employment Framework. This diagram depicts the conceptual framework of youth unemployment in Raniya. It delineates causal dimensions, intervention pillars, cross-cutting principles, and expected social and economic outcomes.

## **7. Detailed Implementation Plan for Fostering Sustainable Youth Employment in Raniya**

This section describes practical solutions to the youth unemployment challenge specific to Raniya, including stakeholders, needed resources, and timescales for enforcing the policy framework above. The section outlines the fundamental approaches of data acquisition and evaluation that would support the justification of the evidence-based policy. It is an effort to build more sustainable jobs and livelihoods in Raniya around a high-potential local economy, human capital development, and governance, all of which are driven to the highest degree with data-based inputs to inform actions under the initiative and collectively intend to drastically lower youth unemployment.

### **A. Implementation Principles:**

**Localisation:** Adapting programs to special needs, assets, and way of life in Raniya.

**Coordination:** Making sure that the private sector, academia, international organisations, civil society, local government, and KRG ministries work effectively together:

**Adaptive via Evidence:** Ongoing monitoring and evaluation—based on robust data collection and analysis to guide changes and confirm impact.

**Youth Focus:** A crucial aspect of the planning and implementation lifecycle for keeping relevant to youth interests and their ownership. **Sustainability:** Creating interventions designed to be sustained and scaled over time with fewer external resources.

### **B. Phased Implementation Plan (Estimated 5-Year Horizon)**

#### **Phase 1: Foundation & Planning (Months 1–12)**

##### **-Establishment of a Raniya Youth Employment Task Force**

**Summary:** An established multi-stakeholder body/task force, directed by Raniya's local administration, including relevant KRG Ministries (e.g., Labour & Social Affairs; Planning; Youth & Culture), Raparin University (Raniya campus), local chambers of commerce, civil society (youth) associations, and private sector representatives.

**Responsible entity:** Local Administration of Raniya, KRG Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour.

**Output:** Defined mandate, meeting frequency, and responsibilities for task force.

##### **-Comprehensive Local Data Collection and Needs Assessment:**

**Description:** Conduct extensive local data collection for Raniya to establish a solid baseline and better understand the multidimensional problem.

##### **This task incorporates a few of the key methodologies:**

**Data Collection:** Develop and execute a formal survey distributed among a representative portion of the youth in Raniya (18-35 years).



**With your help, the survey will measure some key aspects quantitatively, such as:**

1. Regarding demographics: consider the participants age, gender, educational level, income.
2. Regarding career status: employed, unemployed, or underemployed, and how long have you been unemployed for?
3. Experience of the unemployed person on finding a job, how long they tried, what qualification was required .... etc.
4. Showcasing the importance of having more than a few skills in work, like critical thinking and problem solving, this part is to show skill gaps that are known of today among individuals, to compare them with their current competencies.
5. Another part is that barriers to employment are high in some areas, in regard of economic, social, cultural, political, and legal factors, this may cause them to not be able to gain positions in some fields easily compared to others.
6. Aspirations of participants to showcase the level of imagination they have toward the future and Suggested Solutions to the current issues.
7. Immigration standards according to the participants and their consequences.

Here, if possible, data will be collected digitally instead of paper forms and manual logs to enhance the efficiency and accuracy of the data, this could be done by providing online surveys, tablets... etc.

**Parallel to the survey, we recommend performing an Interviews with key Informants:**

Through Conduction of semi-structured interviews with a few key informants about the whole situation in Raniya, based on availability and the diversity of perspective and expertise they bring.

Unemployed Strike: Here we can make a forum that will gather different people with different background of unemployment, there they can share their story and struggles they face during finding a stable job, to give space to complex individual narratives, accounts of marginalisation, and ways of resisting.

Local Government Officials: There should be a continuous collaboration with the local administration of Raniya and the related ministries and directorates inside the government, for example Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (e.g., Labour and Employment, Youth Small Projects Support Fund, Social Security, Social Welfare) to understand policy import, past and current programs which is working in this field, and allocation of resources.

Representatives of Civil Society and Youth Groups: to understand social support networks, community-based initiatives, and local challenges. Academics at the Vocational Institutes and Raparin University (Raniya campus) will focus on research-oriented solutions, outputs from teaching, and the relevance of courses.

Get Local Businesses: Business owners and entrepreneurs need to know your labour demand, skill level, regulation, and growth.

Lawyers: Identify legal obstacles to starting businesses and support equitable workplace policies.

Community and cultural leaders: Need to help how cultural norms shape career paths of work, entrepreneurship, and migration.

Development Partners: (e.g.: GIZ)–To identify potential areas of partnership and best practices.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Facilitate focus group discussions with diverse segments of Raniya's youth, such as graduates, vocational school students, potential migrants, and young women, to encourage dialogue, address challenges, and confirm the findings from surveys and interviews.

Responsibility: This is conducted by research groups (e.g. Raparin University, Independent researchers) with the direction of the task force.

Outputs: a baseline data report with a national scope, a skills gap report with a local Raniya focus, a local market opportunities report, and a resource inventory.

#### **-Data Analysis (Survey and Interview Data)**

Details: To maximize the value of content, it is essential to employ data analysis techniques. It is essential to develop methods for analyzing the collected data to effectively utilize the insights gained from it.

#### **-Quantitative Data Analysis (Surveys): Software (SPSS, R) This involves:**

Descriptive statistics: Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize the youth unemployment rates, demographics, and attitudes among youths in Raniya.

Inferential statistics: Use regression analysis, chi-square tests, t-tests, and cross-tabulations to compare trends across Raniya youth segments and produce meaningful correlations between perceived discrimination, lack of employment, education level, access to credit, etc.

Spatial Analysis (if possible) Geo data: Map hotspots of unemployment in Raniya.

Qualitative Data Analysis (Interviews & Focus Groups): Thematic analysis to systematically examine and analyze qualitative data.

#### **This will involve:**

Interviews and focus groups: The conversation is recorded; this will then be a lot to have an overall idea.

Coding: The process of developing an initial coding scheme informed by research questions (social drivers, governance issues, economic impediments, and recommended actions) and applying codes to segments of text.

Identify Themes: Collapse codes into large, overarching themes that represent common patterns, perceptions, and experiences of youth unemployment in Raniya.

Interpreting Links Between Themes: identifying causal mechanisms and determining insights that can inform policy recommendations. Triangulation quantitative survey data and document analysis are utilized to confirm, enhance validity, and augment the reliability of main findings from qualitative data.

Responsibility: Research Team (data analysts, qualitative researchers).

Output: Executive summaries of the key findings, critical insights, and policy implications of the quantitative and qualitative information from Raniya's study.

### **-Legal and Regulatory Review (Raniya-Specific)**

Description: Identify areas of congestion and opportunities for improvement by reviewing the relevant local bylaws and KRG regulations that govern business operations, licensing, and registration in Raniya.

Responsibility: KRG Ministry of Justice, Raniya Youth Employment Task Force, Raniya Legal Department.

Output: Proposed Revisions and Regulatory Barriers Report.

### **-Strategy on Resource Mobilisation and Partnerships:**

Description: Comprehensive funding strategy Identify existing potential budget allocations from the KRG, possible donor support from international actors—for instance, UN agencies, the EU, GIZ, and many more, diaspora-investments as well as private sector funds. Talk to potential partners for early discussions.

Responsibility: The Raniya Youth Employment Task Force, the KRG Ministry of Planning, and the International Relations Office.

Output: include a funding strategy document, a preliminary list of potential partners, and initial engagement reports.

## **Phase 2: Pilot & Capacity Building (Months 13-30)**

### **-Roll-out of Raniya Business Incubator & Accelerator:**

Description: Set up a physical or virtual center in Raniya offering office space, connectivity for the internet, mentorship, guidance to develop a business plan, legal assistance, and networking for budding entrepreneurs willing to start their businesses.

Responsibility: Raparin University, Raniya's Local Administration, and the Chamber of Commerce will carry out this task with scope for further participation on the side of NGOs.

Output: A youth-focused business incubator/accelerator that is fully operational, actively supporting and providing enrolled youth businesses.

### **-Establishing the Raniya's Youth Business Financing Initiative:**

Description: Formulate and start the funds according to the guidelines laid out in (Recommendation 3.1.1), e.g., eligibility, application procedure, and loan/grant terms. Next, begin disbursing initial funds to carefully selected pilot projects.

Responsibility: Output cited: Raniya Youth Employment Task Force, KRG Ministry of Finance, and local banks/financial institutions.

Output: Establishment of a financial base of funding and working capital for empowering youth enterprises.

### **-Problem-Solving Career Tracks**

Implement 2-3 pilot vocational training initiatives: It should comprise intensive and robust technical training initiatives at one or more of the local institutions in Raniya with a focus on upcoming skills (e.g., mechanisation of agriculture, digital marketing, plumbing, etc.) as indicated in the skill gap analysis discovery. Modules on entrepreneurship and soft skills should be given priority.

Responsibility: Entire responsibility rests on the Raniya Directorate of Education, private sector alliance, and local vocational institutes.

Output: Pilot program feedback reports and skilled youth with improved skills.

### **- Localised career persuasion & job-placement services**

Details: A career counselling desk at the local Raniya administration itself or a youth centre. It can be a dedicated desk to individually guide every youth of the town. Start establishing a Raniya job registry in the area.

Responsibility: Directorate of Labour of Raniya, Youth Organizations.

Outcome: Have grounded Career services and initial job placements.

### **-Local Governance Capacity Building:**

Description: Offer and provide tailored specialized capacity-building training to Raniya's local administration officials in strategic planning, economic development, project management, regulatory streamlining, and governmental transparency practices.

Responsibility: Responsibility for this activity lies with the KRG Ministry of Interior (Local Administration Affairs) with the assistance of other international development partners that may be involved.

Output: The goal in this situation is to develop the capacity of local government and provide trained local officials and improved administrative procedures.

### **Phase 3: Growth scaling & system Integration (Months 31-60)**

#### **-The Details of the Proposed Expansion of Business Assistant Programs are outlined as follows:**

Description: Expand and scale up the Raniya Business Development Fund and Incubator/Accelerator based on experience to date in the pilot. Roll out technical support to priority sectors for Raniya (food processing and tourism).

Responsibility: Follows the Raniya Youth Employment Task Force and its private sector partners.

Output: More youth-run businesses in the community and a less homogenised local economy.

#### **System Vocational Education Reform**

Description: Integrate successful pilot vocational training programs into the mainstream curriculum of the respective educational institutions in Raniya. An exploration of dual education (apprenticeship and school).

Responsibility: KRG Ministry of Education and domestic industries and the Directorate of Education in Raniya.

Output: Modified vocational curricula and enhanced opportunities for apprenticeships.

#### **-Upgrading with improved linkages to the market**

Description: Develop targeted projects for upgrading local roads, reliable electricity, and fast internet in specific Raniya economic areas. Create online demand platforms (marketplaces, exhibitions, etc.) for Raniya goods.

Responsibility: KRG Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Electricity, Ministry of Communication, Municipality of Raniya.

Output: Improved local infrastructure and improved market access for Raniya businesses.

#### **-Social and Cultural Initiatives Strengthening**

Description: Provide further assistance to Raniya's youth organisations to help them implement programmes based on civic engagement, mental health, and social integration. Large-scale public awareness campaigns promote vocational professions and entrepreneurship as a career choice.

Responsibility: Involvement: Raniya Youth Organisations, media, community leaders, and the Ministry of Youth and Culture.

Output: This would reduce the stigma associated with certain careers – a net positive value and a higher degree of social bonding.

#### Phase 4: Incentivised Growth & Policy Refinement (60+ months)

##### -Institutionalisation of Support Structures

Description: Making the Raniya Youth Business Development Fund and the Incubator and vocational schemes sustainable or part of the regular government or private sector institutions

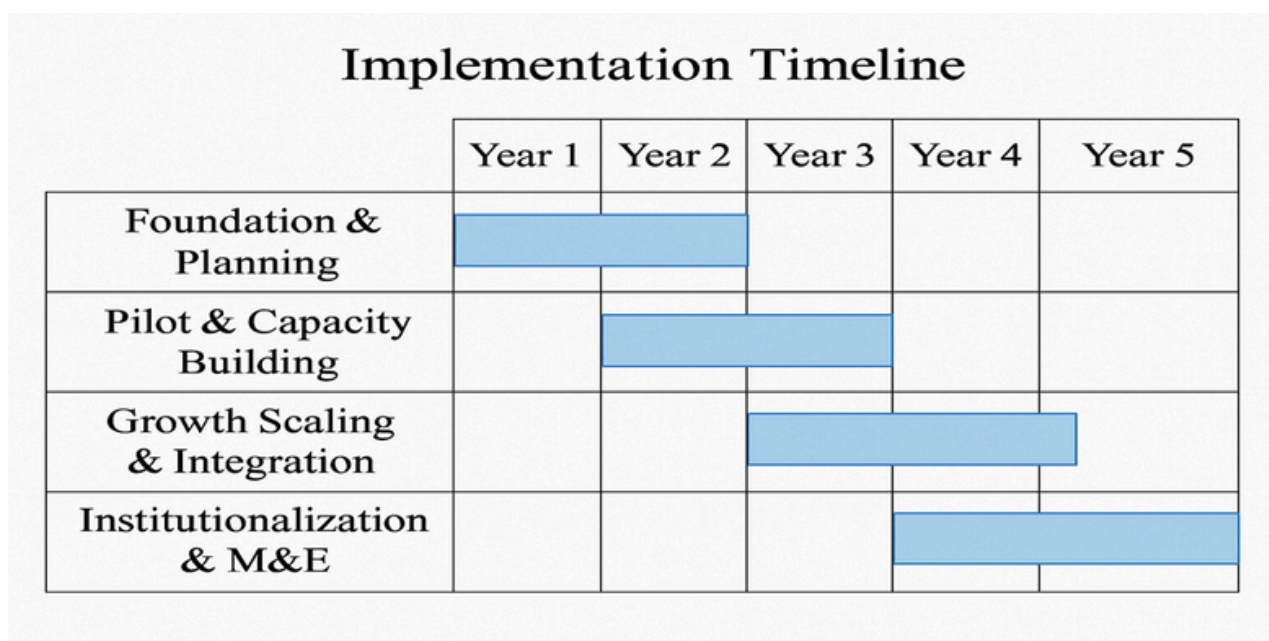
Responsibility: with all stakeholders.

##### -Ongoing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjusting:

Description: Operationalise the strong M&E system outlined in the policy paper. Conduct impact analyses, review KPIs on a regular basis, and make data- and locally-driven policy changes.

Responsibility: Raniya Youth Employment Task Force in coordination with independent evaluators. Raniya Youth Employment Task Force in partnership with independent evaluators.

Output: Agendas for policy briefs, annual M&E reports, continuous education.



**Figure 21.** Chronology for Executing the Five-Year Youth Employment Strategy. A Gantt chart depicting the stages of the youth employment program: Foundation and Planning, Pilot and Capacity Building, Growth Scaling and Integration, and Institutionalization, Monitoring, and Evaluation.

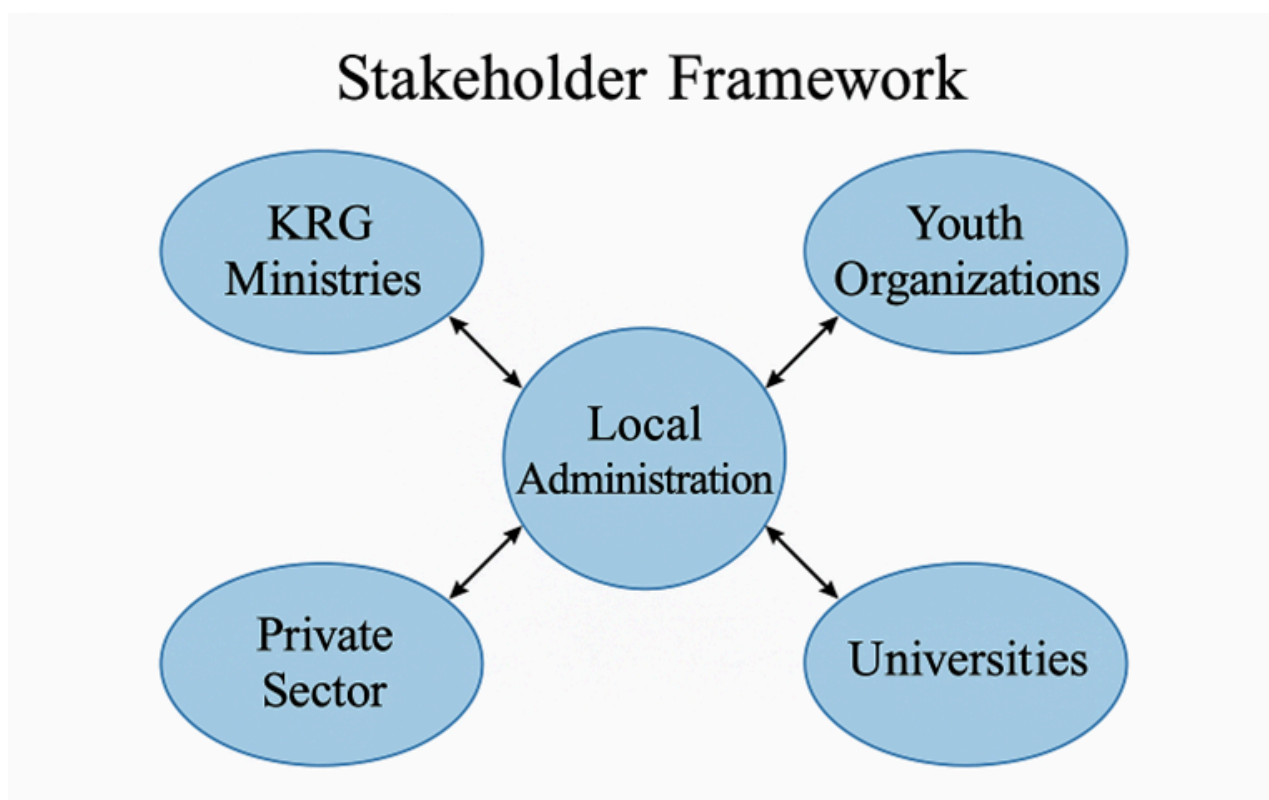


### **-Stakeholders and their roles:**

General coordination, leading task forces, adjusting local regulations, implementing local projects, and community engagement are the responsibilities of Raniya and its municipalities and districts. This statement also works for collecting information on unemployment, job market regulation, monitoring vocational training, and providing social security to the KRG Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (and the relevant Directorates in Raparin and Raniya).

The Ministry of Planning in the KRG is responsible for long-term planning, investment coordination, data verification, and incorporation with national development plans.

KRG Ministry of Education/Higher Education & Scientific Research (including Raparin University): curriculum reform, vocational training standards, research, skills mapping Private sector interaction, mentorship, linkage to markets, and business feedback: Raniya Chamber of Commerce and Local Business Associations. Activities undertaken by Raniya's youth organizations include lobbying, organizing, running social programs, engaging in community life, and providing feedback opportunities to stakeholders. Banks and microfinance are local financial institutions that provide loans and lines of credit to small enterprises.



**Figure 22.** Raniya Youth Employment Stakeholder Framework. A coordination diagram illustrating the collaboration among KRG Ministries, Local Administration, Private Sector, Universities, and Youth Organizations in the implementation of the employment framework.

### **-Resource Mobilisation Strategy:**

**Incentivize:** the KRG budget to allocate specific resources in terms of programs and funding for youth employment in Raniya as an area of strategic importance and urgency.

**International Donor Funding:** This is to engage with international partners; its purpose is to mandate stabilisation, economic growth, and youth development agenda for Raniya.

**Diaspora:** investment call upon the Kurdish diaspora from Raniya and Raparin to contribute to development funds or to start-up companies in the region.

**Private Sector Investment:** Attract private sector companies to invest in Raniya and create jobs by offering attractive incentives (tax exemptions, simplified processes, reliable infrastructure, etc.). Study of the Public-Private Partnership model on business incubators, vocational training institute and infrastructure development projects.

**Microfinance Institutions:** Support the growth and promotion of regional microfinance institutions to extend and provide small loans to local businesses.

### **-Implementation Challenges and Mitigation Strategies in Raniya:**

The overall implementation of this framework in Raniya, which is discussed in this policy paper, certainly will encounter multiple sources of challenges, particularly shaped by the complexities within the Kurdistan Regional Government's context.

**Stability:** The political situation and its stability will be the critical aspect of the process. Ensuring long-term and sustained political commitment in Raniya from both the KRG central government and local authorities is crucial to enforce long-term policy reforms.

**Mitigation:** Promoting unified and broad data-driven consensus among political figures and stakeholders through advocacy and lobbying will be able to highlight the enduring value and benefits of stability in Raniya for inclusive growth and development.

**Fiscal Constraints:** Financial limitation restricts resources for investment at the scale of infrastructure upgrades, training programs, and direct business support in Raniya.

**Mitigation:** There are some ways that can possibly be used to mitigate the problem of fund resources, for example, exploring innovative financing models and strategies by approaching (e.g., public-private partnerships, diaspora investments from Raniya's emigrants, and international donor grants), this will ultimately lead to prioritise high-impact interventions that specifically benefit to Raniya, and ensure efficient resource allocation.

**Capacity Building:** One of the other main issues in implementing this process is attributed to the fact that increasing knowledge and education is impeded due to weak institutional capabilities within Raniya's local government and civil society organisations for policy implementation.

**Mitigation:** To solve this issue, one possible way is to Invest in specific and targeted training and technical assistance programs with the aid of international NGOs or well-known local NGOs and expert figures for Raniya's local government officials and youth organisation leaders.



**Data Scarcity:** There are usually some factors that affect the quality of paper policies, one which is in Raniya is also quite common, lacking reliable and comprehensive data, they are not organized, accurate and disaggregated, which can impede effective policy design and evaluation.

**Mitigation:** To solve data accuracy and reliability, we suggest Prioritising and funding robust data collection mechanisms that are specifically designed for Raniya, which include regular local labour force surveys and business registries. This helps to build a trusted method to decide and make decisions as integral parts of the policy framework.

**Resistance to Change:** As previously mentioned, cultural norms have great dominance over the overall workflow inside governmental institutions; they are entrenched bureaucratic practices that may resist proposed reforms suggested by this paper policy.

**Mitigation:** Solving this issue will be a real challenge due to its cultural background, which needs to be considered, there should be pilot projects within Raniya to demonstrate success, with the aid and involvement of key local stakeholders early in the design process; their contribution is required to see its actual implementation and success.

### **Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for Raniya:**

An effective and strong M&E framework is crucial to indicate integrity, accountability, and flexibility in the management of this policy specifically for Raniya.

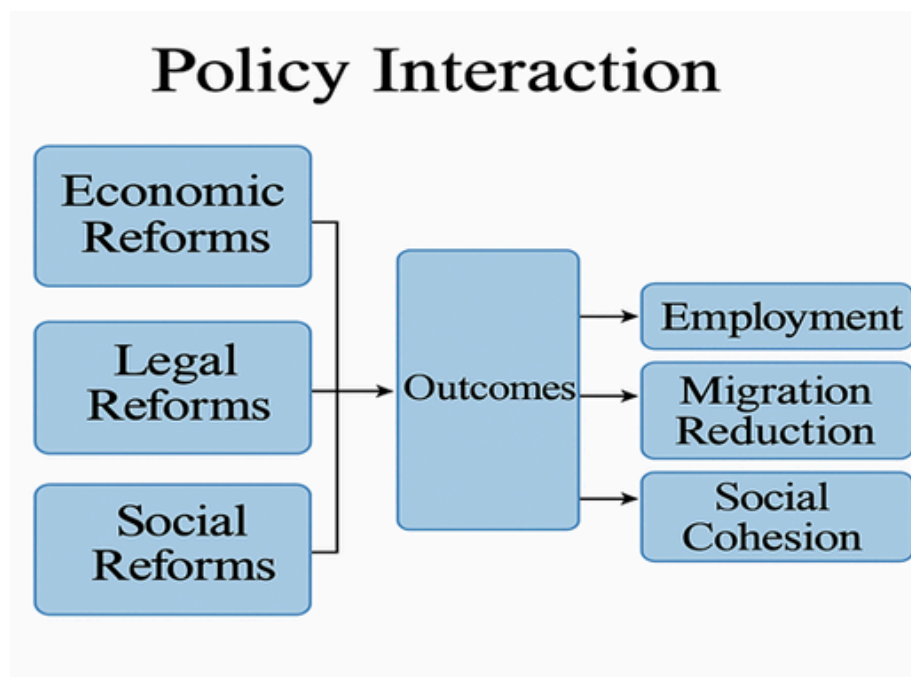
The key indicators to clarify that the process worked well are called Key Performance indicators.

1. A measurable reduction in the youth unemployment rate in Raniya, disaggregated by age and gender.
2. The quantity of youth-led, founded and maintained businesses in Raniya.
3. Improved participation and graduation in the number of young people enrolling in vocational training for youth in Raniya, which is directly tied to local employment outcomes.
4. Growth in the number of private sector employment opportunities created in Raniya.
5. Clear decrease in the rates of youth migration from Raniya to other countries.
6. An increase in the rate of youth participation and active involvement in local government and policy-making in Raniya.

**Data Collection:** There has to be an effective monitoring and evaluation program that runs continuously so that the overall process is smooth. It is achieved through conducting regular qualitative assessments in Raniya (via interviews and focus groups among stakeholders and youth) and gathering evidence from administrative records that are available, as well as whatever other information will be helpful, i.e. Raniya-specific registries of businesses and local labour force surveys. Examples of such records include municipal administrations and local directorates of the Ministry of Labour.

**Evaluation Cycles:** For the identification of whether the intervention has already been carried out based on the discovery of the date, there should be an annual evaluation program to study it and change it accordingly to reflect the efficacy of things that have been done in Raniya and inform required changes. These reviews are required with a comprehensive five-year impact evaluation.

**Transparency and Reporting:** during the period of collecting the available data, one point that should be considered before the amount of the data is its quality, which is undertaken by publishing regular progress reports, ensuring data accessibility, and enforcing accountability to the Raniya public and stakeholders.



**Figure 23.** Framework for Policy Interaction. A visual representation illustrating the impact of economic, legal, and social reforms on employment opportunities, the reduction of irregular migration, and the enhancement of societal structures.

## Legal Framework

To ensure the sustainable and legitimate implementation of the "Fostering Sustainable Youth Employment in Raniya" policy, a robust legal framework is essential. The framework is required to provide the core principle rules for business formation, labour governance, managing donor contributions, and project oversight. Below are suggested legal templates for each of these critical areas, designed for the Raniya context and the broader KRG legal environment.

### Recommended legal framework: Regular employment contract

To protect both employers and employees, clear and fair employment regulations are crucial. This section provides a template for the essential elements of an employment contract, grounded in KRG labour laws.

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